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UNCLAS YEREVAN 000657

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN, EB/TPP/BTA FOR JPSCHUTTE, USTR FOR KKUHLMAN, USTR/GENEVA FOR AGREENIDGE

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ETRD ECON AM

SUBJECT: ARMENIA PUSHING HARD ON JACKSON-VANIK

¶1. (U) This cable is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) Deputy Minister of Trade Tigran Davtyan called for a meeting with us March 17, 2004 to protest the failure of the United States to graduate Armenia from the restrictions of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Davtyan said that Jackson-Vanik puts Armenia in the same legal position (i.e., non-application of WTO) with the United States as with Turkey, a fact which he described as "uncomfortable." He also pointed out that the U.S. graduated Georgia from Jackson-Vanik within six months of its accession to the WTO. "We want equal treatment" with Georgia, Davtyan insisted. He also argued that uncertainty based on Armenia's year-to-year need for waivers or findings of compliance discouraged investment in trade with the United States. Davtyan added that he avoids the topic of the United States' non-application status when speaking to businessmen or the public, but that as time goes on he foresees the situation becoming "very embarrassing."

¶3. (SBU) Davtyan told us that the Armenian Embassy in Washington had been instructed to deliver a similar message, and that the GOAM had resolved to push the issue strongly on all fronts because they feel that too much time has passed with no movement forward.

WALKER